Constraints

BOOST YOUR
CÒΣ@TIVITY

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Learning outcomes

AFTER COMPLETING THEME 3 ABOUT CONSTRAINTS, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO

• Explain and discuss the dual role that constraints play in a creative process, as constraints can both block and enable new solutions

• Analyse and discuss key constraints in a given creative assignment

• Challenge and introduce constraints constructively as a resource to develop more original solutions
What do you think of when you hear the word "constraints"?

When have you met constraints?
- In school, at home, on the Internet...?
Assumptions about "constraints"

- **Assumption 1**: Fewer constraints are better
- **Assumption 2**: More constraints are better

Artists like Stravinskij, Picasso, and more

General assumption

Degree of constrainedness
"Constraints" as superordinate

Constraints covers many different subterms like: creative choices, preferences, obstacles, barriers, needs, demands, wishes, conventions, limits, rules, etc.
Creative constraints in practice

LEGO bricks

Puzzle-platform video game: LIMBO by Playdead
Said about constraints in…

**Art:**
“The more constraints one imposes, the more one frees one’s self of the chains that shackle the spirit”

**Innovation:**
“Constraints shape and focus problems and provide clear challenges to overcome. Creativity thrives best when constrained [...] Innovation is born from the interaction between constraint and vision”
– Marissa Mayer (first female employee at Google and former CEO of Yahoo), 2006.
Types of constraints

Intrinsic

Materials, weight, colour, etc.
Types of constraints

Imposed
Deadline, budget, brand, etc...
Self-imposed
Choices you have made yourself; target groups, colour, materials, collaborators, context, tools, etc...
+ Invisible

Habits, norms and traditions
Different degrees of constraintedness

Constraint quality

Free  Flexible  Locked

Design situation

Under-constrained  Over-constrained
"The sweet spot" model

Potential for creativity

Under-constrained

Over-constrained

Degree of constrainedness

High

Low

high